THE MADRAS LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Thursday, the 4th December 1947.

The House met in the Council Chamber, Fort St. George, at three of the clock, Mr. President (THE HON. SRI R. B. RAMAKRISHNA RAJU) in the Chair.

I.—UNVEILING OF THE PORTRAIT OF MAHATMA GANDHI BY HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR OF MADRAS.

At the invitation of the President, the function was attended by Lady Nye, the Hon. Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, all the Ministers, the Members of both the Houses, the Secretaries to Government and several visitors.

The proceedings commenced with the singing of "*Jana Gana Mana*" by the Orchestra of Renuka Films, Madras.

MR. PRESIDENT :—"Your Excellency, Lady Nye, Hon. the Speaker, Hon. the Premier and other Hon. Ministers and the hon. Members of the Madras Legislature,—I extend to you a hearty welcome and thank you for having accepted my invitation to this function. Our first duty to-day is to pay homage to one of the greatest leading personalities of the day, Mahatma Gandhi. Mr. K. V. Vaidyanadhan, a talented artist of Madras and a friend of mine, has presented a portrait of Mahatmaji, painted by him, to this House and I have accepted the gift on your behalf and in anticipation of your approval. The picture is not a conventional portrait of Mahatmaji, but one drawn from imagination and depicts him as engaged in one of the foremost missions of his life, namely, the removal of untouchability. I learn that the artist has presented a copy of the portrait to Mahatmaji himself in 1938 who appreciated and accepted it. Many artists of repute and our national leaders have also praised the work. I hope the picture and the lofty motive which prompted the gift of such a valuable piece of art will also meet with your approval and even admiration. With your permission I congratulate the artist and thank him for his generous gesture.

"Though India specially, has cause to be eternally grateful to that noble soul, who laid his whole life at the altar of her service, and by unswerving loyalty and faith in his lofty ideals secured her, freedom and an equality of place and status in the comity of nations, yet it is apparent that he is no longer the sole possession or property of any particular country, but belongs to the world as a whole. His steadfast devotion to truth and his ennobling and all-embracing love, have reached such maturity and perfection, that to-day, they transcend all barriers of caste, race, religion, language and country, spread their wings far and wide and yearn to gather under their protective fold the entire humanity, nay, all creation, and bind them together in unbreakable silken threads of mutual love, regard and affection. Let us all join our hands and hearts in soulful prayer to the Almighty and beseech Him, that He be pleased to

vouchsafe unto this, His messenger on earth to achieve even during his life time what so many other mighty, lofty and loving souls strove for in the past, namely, banishment of fear, hate, jealousy and strife in this unhappy world, and the establishment of a KINGDOM OF LOVE, PEACE AND HAPPINESS on earth. I am sure you will agree with me when I say, that more than honouring him, this House will be honouring itself by having his portrait within its precincts and may his noble ideals and spotless life of simplicity, truth, piety and purity inspire the deliberations of this House.

"The question of finding a suitable person to unveil the portrait of such a great personage exercised my mind to some extent. The personal qualities of His Excellency have been greatly responsible for this choice. Even at the very first time, I met His Excellency, on invitation, he gave me the impression that here was a man who had come to India not to rule but to help us to rule. There was nothing of that gubernatorial patronage and condescension with which we were painfully familiar in the past. He put me instantly at ease and dealt with me as from man to man. He exhorted me to treat him as one of the team and said that he would consider it a privilege to help the Madras Government to work successfully. The simplicity of his bearing and the freshness of his approach to various subjects are so taking and the sincerity which breathes through all his utterances, is so transparent that we cannot but admire him for these qualities which are not so frankly exhibited by an administrator of his rank. Your Excellency as you also happen to be the Head of the Province, you are doubly welcome. I am very thankful to Your Excellency for having accepted my invitation and now I have the honour to request Your Excellency, on behalf of this august House, to unveil the portrait of Mahatma Gandhi." *Jai Hind.*

HIS EXCELLENCY SIR ARCHIBALD NYE:—"Mr. President, hon. Members of both Houses, Ladies and Gentlemen, I do not profess to be a practised or accomplished speaker and I hope therefore that you will bear with me and forgive my lack of eloquence by the sincerity of what I have to say.

"First of all I should like to thank you, Mr. President, very much for having asked me to come here to-day and when I say that I am not using a mere conventional phrase. I mean it. I think that to-day I have perhaps been paid the greatest compliment since I have been Governor of this Province, because I, an Englishman, have been asked to come and unveil the portrait of the national leader of India and courtesy could not go further than that.

"I would like to tell you that I have had a message from His Excellency Mr. C. Rajagopalachari in which he says:

'The occasion is truly historic and your participation in the function will seal the bond between England and free India and mark a new era of friendship and free association between your people and us. May good understanding spread and Gandhiji's

plea that love shall guide us in all our affairs and not force prevail more and more and make joy where now sorrow and fear darken life.'

"Now, Ladies and Gentlemen, it would be all a very simple thing for me, for anyone else to be prepared to talk for hours about the subject of the portrait which we are about to unveil. It would be a very simple thing to talk about Mahatma Gandhi as a politician, as an economist, as a spiritual leader, as a saint, as a man who is responsible to a very large extent for the removal of untouchability, for the doctrine of non-violence which he has preached and for many other aspects of this many-sided man. For I am sure it is realized throughout the world that on any day and by any examination he is one of the really big men in the world. And he is unusual in this respect that his greatness is recognized during his life-time and not, as in so many cases, after his death. But I will not dilate upon these qualities for a variety of reasons. The first is this that so many of you, ladies and gentlemen, know much more about his life from a personal and intimate point of view than I myself do, that you may regard such a speech from me as a mere impertinence. But there is a second and more important reason and that is this. I would much prefer, in the few things that I have to say to look to the future rather than to the past. If this man stands out pre-eminently amongst men, a Colossus among pigmies on his past record, I venture to say that I think there is a very great possibility, if only his life is spared a little while longer, that history may judge that great as his achievements in the past have been, perhaps the greatest contribution that he will make to India and to the world might well be since the 15th August this year. It seems to me that important though the past has been and great though his influence has been, the future is full of portents and his influence might yet be still greater.

"Ladies and Gentlemen, those of us who live in Madras live in a peaceful province and to some extent we do not really know what is going on in India as a whole. Now I am no pessimist; on the contrary I am an optimist and whilst there are many difficulties facing India, I believe we can overcome them if only we do the right thing. India to-day is standing at the cross-roads and the fate of India inevitably depends upon which road she chooses to march. Therefore the views, and the influence of really great men become at this moment in her history absolutely vital. Our problem briefly is not a political one; it is not a financial one; it is not a military one; it is not an economic one, it is a human and spiritual problem.

"The terrible things that have happened in the north—I am not going into the details of them as most of you are fully aware of the things that have happened—have engendered hate and a lack of forgiveness in the hearts of mankind. There are people who have suffered. They have only to tell their sufferings and Heaven knows, they have been bad enough. These sufferings have only to

be told for them to be exaggerated. Truth, naked truth is terrible enough thing for us all to know, but rumours make things much worse.

" Throughout this country there is a deep burning resentment against those people who have been responsible for these vile tortures, massacres and brutalities. Even the meekest men, calm, sensible and evenly balanced men, even in them there is a surging of passion, of hate and a desire for retribution.

" Now, this great man, this good man Gandhiji has seen what path such a doctrine of hate will lead this country into. He has seen with the clarity, if you like of a saint or a statesman, he has seen that this doctrine of hate will lead us to nothing but destruction and therefore, he has preached and preached with great force that we must wash away from our hearts any feeling of resentment, any feeling of hate and we must not above all visit our wrath upon innocent people who happen to be in minorities in this country. He has boldly proclaimed that India is not to be a Hindu State and that all men who are good citizens and faithful people in this country, whatever their caste or creed, whatever their religion, will be welcome in this country.

" The Prime Minister of India, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru who, if I may venture to say, seems to me to have risen in stature enormously during these past few months has accepted this doctrine as the doctrine of the Central Government. And he is loyally doing his best to carry this out.

" Ladies and Gentlemen, you know and I know that there are certain forces acting against this doctrine—people who think differently, people who think that we should take revenge irrespective of equity or justice—these are the forces of evil. And it seems to me that it largely lies in the hands of Gandhiji and the doctrine which he has preached to-day whether this great country will face its problems with tolerance and with justice or whether it will face it with meanness and injustice. Surely there can be no question as to which way we are to go. It seems to me that in this Province of Madras we must listen very carefully to the words of this great leader. We must listen very carefully to his doctrine and we must accept it without reservation. Madras, fortunately has an enviable record. I think the great majority in this Province can properly say to the small minorities in this Province, 'Our record in the past has been unexceptionable. We have treated you with absolute justice. We have even gone further. We have treated you with generosity.' I think the majority can fairly say to our minorities in this Province, 'We expect in return from you that you would be as good citizens of this Province as we ourselves are.' I think we can say to them, 'We expect you to owe allegiance to this Government and to nobody else.' And I think we can then add, 'And we promise you that we will make no differentiation whatsoever between any man's caste or his creed or his religion or his politics. We will victimise no one. We will

treat you in the way we have been told by our leader to treat you, which is, with brotherly love and kindness.' That, I think, is what we ought to do and what we ought to say.

"Ladies and Gentlemen, will you allow me—you have been so kind to me—will you allow me the privilege of being quite frank on this question? I do not meet any responsible man in this Province who would not subscribe to the principles which I have been enunciating. They would all say, 'Oh, Yes. I absolutely agree with you. You are quite right.' But the great difficulty, Ladies and Gentlemen, that we have is not merely the question of paying lip service to certain principles but in carrying them out in practice. That is where so many of us find so much difficulty. With the best intention in the world to be just, one has great temptation to be unjust. With the best intention in the world of not listening to any rumours and not to give way to passion, we tend to listen to rumours and our judgment become unbalanced.

"Now, here your leader stands above the ordinary rut of mankind. He not only says these things, but *does them*. He carries them out. He genuinely feels no hate, no malice, no discrimination.

"It is perhaps asking a very great deal that ordinary men and women like you and me should rise to such height. We are human. We have our faults. We are bound to make our mistakes. But I think it is within the competence of us all to do everything in our power to make a solemn undertaking with our conscience, which is really what matters that we would genuinely do what we can to carry out the teachings of this great man, the teachings which are right, sound and spiritually correct and statesmanly.

"Ladies and Gentlemen, might I ask you, most of the important people in the Province assembled here to-day this? Let any man criticise you on this ground or on that ground or the other ground, but let no man be able to criticise you on the ground of want of tolerance. Let no man be able to say, 'This man is intolerant. This man is unfair.' If all of you, ladies and gentlemen, who hold such important positions and exercise so much influence, if you could follow the teachings of the leader in this great respect, then I can say without the slightest fear of contradiction that we can have peace, happiness and prosperity in this Province which we all love so much.

"It gives me very great pleasure to unveil the portrait."

[His Excellency then unveiled the portait of Gandhiji when Gandhiji's favourite hymn "Vaishnava Janathe" was sung in chorus.

Photographs were taken of His Excellency and the Hon. President standing just below the portrait and of the whole House.

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Their Excellencies, Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Ministers and the Leader of the Opposition were garlanded.

National Song was sung by the orchestra.

Photographic reproductions of the portrait unveiled were presented to their Excellencies and a few others. Halftone block reproductions of the portrait were also distributed to all.]

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" Mr. President, Your Excellency and friends, it is a great privilege to me to be able to say perhaps the two sweetest words 'Thank you'. It is not given to very many of us to say that and when it comes to saying that, it is very little appreciated and realized. But from the events that have happened this afternoon, you would agree with me that we are all filled with a sense of gratefulness and appreciation. I am sure that all the members present here including the Hon. President and the Hon. Speaker would echo our sentiment of gratefulness to His Excellency our Governor for having responded to the kind invitation of the President as representative of the House and come here and grace this occasion not only with his presence but also for his few words of appreciation, so finely said and so beautifully expressed. It is not given to very many in his position to say what he has said before an Assembly of this sort. I hope and trust that the appeal which he has made will go deep into our hearts and that we in this Province will hold it as a talisman for all our future conduct, for the peace and harmony which we expect to prevail and for the love between caste and caste and creed and creed, and between the Opposition and the Government. Though they may happen to differ from one another, they may yet learn to live with love, regard and respect for each other.

" Sir, this event is very unique in the history of the legislatures of this country. This is the one solitary event after our freedom where it has been given to the Governor of a Province to come and honour the greatest leader of our times in this House of the legislature. More than the function itself, I would reiterate the thoughts that he has evoked in our minds.

" His Excellency said that he is not an orator and that he cannot speak well. Perhaps he said that out of humility. After having heard him we know what he really is (cheers). In fact those of us who have known him at close-quarters will certainly endorse every word of what I have said. Both in the Cabinet and outside, we know the sober, kind and loving influence which he has exercised.

" In thanking His Excellency, I cannot afford to forget Lady Nye, his wife, who shares with him all these fine qualities of head and heart (cheers) which she has been exhibiting in all her activities along with her illustrious husband. It is indeed very kind

of her to have graced this occasion along with His Excellency. We do feel very proud that both of you have thought it fit to come to us and grace this occasion and give us the benefit of the advice that you have given. We assure Your Excellency that we will treasure the valuable words of advice which you have given and the valuable tribute you have paid to the great leader of our country.

"Sir, I thank you once again."

[A group photograph of the Members of the Council with their Excellencies was taken outside the Chamber.]

[*Note.*—An asterisk (*) at the commencement of a speech indicates revision by the Member.]

II.—CONDOLENCE RESOLUTION.

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" Sir, I move— 4 p.m.

'*that this House places on record its deep sense of sorrow at the demise of Sowdagar Abdul Huq Sahib Bahadur, M.L.C., and conveys its sense of sympathy to the members of his bereaved family.*'

It is a pity that it has fallen to my lot to begin a session, particularly after a very fine and pleasant function, with a condolence resolution which I have got to move. Mr. S. Md. Abdul Huq Sahib who was a Member of this Council is dead and we, those of us that are left yet behind, have got to discharge our duties by those of our colleagues who are no more. On behalf of this Council, I beg to convey our grief and our sorrow to the members of his family for the grievous loss which they have sustained and which this Council has sustained. Mr. S. Md. Abdul Huq was aged about 50 and he died on the 18th of November 1947 at Bezwada. He was elected to the Madras Legislative Council by the Madras North Muhammadan constituency in the year 1940 for a period of nine years. He belonged to a very ancient and respectable family in Bezwada and he was engaged wholly in trade. He was a tradesman in motor cars and accessories in Bezwada and possessed considerable property. He was very charitably disposed and rendered help to the poor people. He was the President of the Bezwada Muslim League. With these words, I move this resolution, Sir."

MR. PRESIDENT :—" I wish to associate myself with the sentiments expressed by the Leader of the House. We have lost a very good member of this House and I hope that God will give his soul rest and peace in Heaven."

The resolution was passed the House standing in silence for a minute.